

Camas area once sold to mill

It was the father of Mrs. Nina Belding Payne who sold the first block of land, 600 acres comprising most of what is now Camas, to the mill company in order that they could establish a paper mill here. Mr. Belding had come in 1882 after buying the land from Judge Dennison of Portland.

Nina Belding was a school teacher at the Grass Valley school in 1882, and the young couple went on a farm in Grass Valley

adjourning the H.M. Knapp place. There they lived 50 years, until the death of Mr. Payne.

Camas' very first school teacher was Mrs. Elizabeth MacMaster Duffin, now deceased. As a 19 year old girl, who had come to LaCamas two years earlier with her mother and six brothers and sisters, Miss MacMaster began teaching in 1884. Her father, A.E. MacMaster, had come first, and had established the first store here.

There were 28 pupils in that first school and they came from all different states and counties so Miss MacMaster taught them from whatever books they had, practically all different. The school house was just a shack of one room, with benches to sit on and an old, borrowed cook stove for heating purposes. There were only about 20 dwellings, more accurately described as shacks, in LaCamas in those days and everybody was pretty poor, Mrs. Duffin declared.